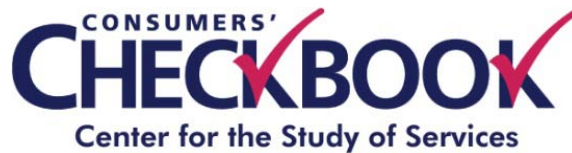


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Consumers' CHECKBOOK/Center for the Study of Services Awarded State Contract for Work on Minnesota Health Insurance Exchange

CHECKBOOK/CSS to Help State Develop Quality Reporting System and Enrollee Satisfaction Survey System for Rating Insurers and Qualified Health Plans

WASHINGTON— Consumers' CHECKBOOK/Center for the Study of Services (CHECKBOOK/CSS), a nonprofit organization that for more than 35 years has provided websites and publications to help consumers choose health insurance plans and health care providers, announced today that, following a competitive bid process, it has been awarded a contract by the State of Minnesota to develop a methodology for measuring and reporting on insurer and health plan quality in Minnesota's health insurance exchange.

Mandated by the Federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA), a health insurance exchange is intended to be an organized competitive marketplace to facilitate the comparison, choice, and purchase of health care coverage for individuals and families and employees of small businesses.

CHECKBOOK/CSS has 34 years of research and experience providing a health plan comparison tool. Originally developed to serve the 8 million consumers who get their insurance through the 200-plus plans in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program, the tool has been adapted into a model tool that exchanges can learn from or that CHECKBOOK/CSS can work with exchanges to implement.

Under its contract with Minnesota, focused on measures of plan quality, CHECKBOOK/CSS will be drawing on its research and experience to help the Minnesota exchange's staff and a multi-stakeholder advisory group identify and evaluate possible measures that consumers will understand and care about—and ways of presenting such measures..

Robert Krughoff, CHECKBOOK/CSS's president, says that, "in testing and surveying users of CHECKBOOK's own plan comparison tool, we have learned what consumers want most in such a tool: a quick display of which plans will cost me least, including out-of-pocket costs for people like me; which will expose me to the least risk of high expenses in a really bad year; which have doctors I would like to use; and which rate highest on the quality of health care and customer service members receive.

"These quality ratings are important because there are real differences in how consistently members get recommended tests and treatments and good outcomes; whether they get help in

staying healthy and managing diseases; how easy it is to deal with the plan and get needed care; how satisfied current members are; and other quality dimensions. We look forward to being involved in the serious work Minnesota is committed to doing on measuring and reporting about plan quality.”

About Consumers’ CHECKBOOK/Center for the Study of Services

Consumers’ CHECKBOOK/Center for the Study of Services (CHECKBOOK/CSS) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to inform the public about the quality and cost of available service providers, educate members of the public on how to select and deal with such providers, and disseminate information that can guide and motivate service providers to deliver higher quality, more efficient services. (www.checkbook.org)

CHECKBOOK/CSS also has extensive experience collecting and processing health care quality measurement information under contract with government and private organizations that produce the information for public reporting on quality and cost of health plans and of providers. This experience gives CHECKBOOK/CSS insight into the costs, motivations, political environment, and business environment in which such measurement data are collected and into many of the methodological issues in measurement, selection of measures for public reporting, and creation of composite measures. (www.cssresearch.org)

Most recently, based on its research, experience, user-testing, user observation, and consumer surveys in connection with *CHECKBOOK’s Guide to Health Plans for Federal Employees*, CHECKBOOK/CSS has developed recommendations for features that should be included in a comparison tool and has adapted a model plan comparison tool for use in exchanges. Its recommendations can be found on the *Health Affairs* journal website at [Helping Consumers Choose Health Plans In Exchanges: Best Practice Recommendations](http://www.healthaffairs.org/content/33/10/1901) and a video tour of the model comparison tool developed for exchanges can be found at www.checkbook.org/plancompare.

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